PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

December 1-December 15, 2010



Women at work during the tailoring training in the Puli Alam Women's Center. Photo: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Training Enables Community Engagement at the Women's Center in Puli Alam: Following the recent construction of the Puli Alam Women's Center in Logar Province, the Logar Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) requested additional USAID assistance to establish activities to promote community involvement. In close coordination with community leaders and the DoWA, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project supported three training workshops in bakery, the kitchen garden, and tailoring, and focused on promoting the facilities at the Women's Center. Closing ceremonies graduated two women from the

bakery training on December 2, and 40 women from the kitchen gardening training on December 8. Additional sessions provided bakery training to 18 men and women from Charkh and Mohammad Agha districts and kitchen gardening training to 15 women in Mohammad Agha. Tailoring training was provided to 42 women from Puli Alam at the Women's Center and approximately 100 women at centers in Charkh and Mohammad Agha, with closing ceremonies anticipated in the coming weeks. All three workshops taught culturally acceptable, marketable skills, while providing an outlet for socialization and engagement. USAID is currently working with DoWA and the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Kabul to plan and implement training for a Board of Directors to establish a self-sufficient and lasting operational system for the Women's Center.

Shahistah, a trainee, commented on benefits of the tailoring training saying, "My husband is working as a Health Cleric in the hospital and earns 3,000 Afs a month, which is nothing; also, we don't have agriculture land. I want to feed my children by tailoring work, so before the Eid's day came, I sewed about 25 clothes for women and I got from 150 Afs to 200 Afs wages for each piece."

LGCD Completed Initial Projects in Volatile
Chak District of Wardak: Starting in August 2010,
USAID's Local Governance and Community
Development (LGCD) project, in collaboration with
community and district leaders and in response to
the U.S. military clearing actions, engaged
communities in the remote and volatile Chak
District of Wardak Province for the first time.
Through this endeavor, a community stabilization
grant (CSG) to rehabilitate a 100m protection wall
of Bahadar Kodai Village, was completed
successfully and without delay on October 30. In
previous years, seasonal floods had washed away



The LGCD DSO surveys the completed protection wall. Photo: USAID/LGCD



December 1-December 15, 2010

much of the wall and damaged households every spring. The wall rehabilitation assisted the community efforts to protect itself from future flooding, while addressing issues with unemployment by providing over 500 person days of work. A second CSG, funding a canal and culvert reconstruction in Kodai Village, was completed on December 6. The CSG supported community efforts to repair damage suffered during the severe flash floods of August 5, and provided 353 person days of community labor. These activities directly followed the U.S. Military's counterinsurgency push in the district and demonstrated GIRoA's ability to respond to community needs in even the most isolated and insecure areas of Wardak.

"Through the construction of this protection wall, Badahar Kodai Village could be safe and protected from the hazards of the flood, and also this protection wall can protect the canal in which leads the water to the electricity company," said Sayad Muhammad, a village elder from Bahadar Kodai.



Arghandab district governor oversees the furniture delivery. Photo: USAID/LGCD

GIRoA Promotes Professional Government Office Space in Zabul: As part of its effort to strengthen district-level governance capacity, GIRoA worked with USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project to install 16 solar panels, 12 high running batteries, one inverter and two charge controllers in the Arghandab District Office and also provided a variety of office furniture. The Arghandab district governor previously received four laptop computers, one UPS, two printers and one stabilizer from USAID. These improvements to the Arghandab offices follow installation of solar lighting and procurement of IT equipment to the district government offices in Shahjoy and Tarnak wa Jaldak

in recent months. The Arghandab solar power activity specifically arose from discussions between the Zabul PRT and Arghandab's district governor. The district governor provided direct support by consistently monitoring progress and personally transporting the materials along the often dangerous road from Qalat to Arghandab. All of these efforts clearly highlight the continued work of GIRoA to establish and legitimize its presence in Zabul by establishing fully equipped and furnished professional district government offices, while working to improve relations with local communities.

Arghandab District Governor Afzal commented on the improvements saying, "It was my high priority to get my office equipped with furniture, therefore I am grateful to LGCD/USAID for this support."

December 1-December 15, 2010

District Governor Helps Link Village to the Gardez-Khost Road: The estimated 250 families of Shagi Qalay Village in Nadir Shah Kot District rely on a local tertiary road network to access the USAID-funded Khost-Gardez road, which connects the village to the district center and government services, such as schools, bazaars, health clinics, and security. However, the road network had fallen into disrepair and the community requested assistance from the district governor, who took the lead in bringing the community's grievance to the attention of the Provincial Development Council and international donors. Through the district governor's initiative, USAID's Local Governance and Community



Ongoing construction of one of the Shagi Qalay Village culverts. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Development project re-graveled two kilometers of road and constructed seven culverts to improve the road's durability in winter and the rainy season. The district governor was actively involved in implementation throughout, working with tribal elders to resolve a dispute over the road's width. This activity has provided a tangible demonstration of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's ability to both maintain infrastructure and to provide services that directly address community grievances.

At the inauguration ceremony for the Shagi Qalay Village road held on December 8, the district governor spoke of this activity's importance to the community: "This community had many grievances, but the road was the key one, because the community had faced problems with transportation. People could not properly transfer their agricultural products to the cities, and patients had difficulty getting to hospitals."



Laborers receive their pay during the weekly disbursement ceremony in Delaram. Photo: LISAID/LGCD

Delaram Trash Pick-Up Activity Builds Stability through Economic Opportunity: The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project have teamed up in the Delaram District of Nimroz Province to continue a trash pick-up activity that ran from February to October and employed nearly a quarter of Delaram's unemployed citizens. On December 4, the second phase of the Delaram trash clean-up activity officially began and now gainfully employs 45 working-aged men, including two supervisors, one manager, two truck drivers, and 40 laborers to clean-up the area around the Delaram Bazaar. This cash-for-work



December 1-December 15, 2010

activity is aimed at alleviating the unemployment that affects approximately 200 working-aged males in the city center of Delaram. In a community that has been plagued with intimidation from anti-government elements, the visible influx of GIRoA-supported short-term labor will illustrate the government's commitment to increasing stability through economic opportunities. In addition to providing living wages to 45 laborers through the end of December, the activity also provides a vital community service by improving the health and sanitation of the Delaram Bazaar, Delaram's largest commercial and cultural institution. Furthermore, as the only non-military donor in Delaram, USAID's partnership with GIRoA is vital to building community engagement with local government entities and officials and combating the influence and propaganda of anti-government elements across the province.

Khost Department of Education Leads Refurbishment of Education Infrastructure:

Cultural restrictions on access to education for girls in Afghanistan often have a negative impact on their social and economic participation later in life. The Khost Department of Education is consequently taking the lead in improving the quality of education available to female youths in the province. This week, at the Bibi Halima Girl's School in Khost City, the deputy director of the Department of Education presided over USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project's delivery of desks, chairs, cupboards, and carpeting, as well as the unveiling of newly plastered and painted walls, doors, and windows. These refurbishments and



The director of the Department of Education presides over the closing ceremony. Photo:

supplies are intended to benefit the estimated 4,525 female students attending the school. The Khost Department of Education has played a similarly proactive role in the planning, implementing, and monitoring of the procurement of school supplies and sports equipment for 16 additional schools in the Mandozai, Tani Shamal, and Nadir Shah Kot districts. Further, the refurbishment and provision of supplies to the Bibi Halima Girls' School follows a grant from LGCD, which helped provide 1,500 books as well as library furniture to the school in August of this year. The Department of Education's active role in improving educational infrastructure throughout Khost demonstrates the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's ability to maintain service delivery in the province.



December 1-December 15, 2010



Representatives from Anasari-AAA travel out to interview community members. Photo: LISAID/LGCD

Re-sourcing Water in Shindand: Lack of information about water resources has resulted in many water disputes and complaints among the local communities concerning water access, quantity, and quality in the Shindand District of Hirat Province. These disputes have impeded community cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and Coalition Forces. In response, the Department of Irrigation requested that USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project commission a water accessibility survey to ascertain the precise number, location, uses for, and perceived quality and quantity of, available water in all five buluks of

Shindand. On December 1, the provincial governor of Hirat formally presented the survey documents to the Directorate of Water Management during a handover ceremony at the Department of Water Management in Hirat City, attended by representatives from USAID, the Department of Economy, LGCD, and the implementing partner, Anasari-AAA, as well as members of Shindand's District Development Assembly. Focused on community perception and not quantitative data collection, commissioning the survey demonstrates GIRoA's interest in engaging with the community and more effectively planning service delivery.

Expressing his appreciation to USAID and GIRoA, Amanuula, head of Shindand's District Development Assembly, underlined the importance of the survey. He felt the data was vital in helping the government understand and address community needs when planning future development activities in Shindand.

Healthcare Training in Tarin Kot: On December 5, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) officials held the opening ceremony for a family healthcare training for women in Tarin Kot. The ceremony was led by Director of Social Affairs Hajj Qoudos Khan, and attended by the Administrative Officer for Tarin Kot's Department of Economy. Eighty women from Tarin Kot will be trained in family healthcare using curriculum approved by the Ministry of Public Health.

The training aims to improve the willingness of the

Women Benefit from Continuing Family

women to use GIRoA health facilities and to promote
GIRoA involvement in preventative family healthcare training, and in basic sanitation and



Opening Ceremony of the Women's Healthcare Training in Tarin Kot. Photo: USAID/LGCD

December 1-December 15, 2010

hygiene. It was implemented following a government request to USAID's LGCD after the success of a similar training completed in late August. The five-week training will emphasize household and community best practices, and includes modules on personal and home hygiene, safe food, safe water, and treatment for diarrhea using the Ministry of Public Health Community Health Worker health and hygiene curriculum. Both the developed curriculum and the training, targeted at women in an underserved community, illustrate GIRoA's focus on promoting family healthcare in Uruzgan, as well as effective service delivery.



Meeting with Charbolack district governor and CDCs. Photo: USAID/CBSG

New Projects in Charbolak District, Balkh
Province: On December 4, a Community Based
Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project Community
Development Fund team visited Charbolak District to
meet with the district governor and heads of the
Community Development Center (CDC). Eight new
projects were requested in the meeting, which were
prioritized, by the district governor and CDCs to be
implemented in key villages of the district. The CBSG
team in Balkh Province is currently processing the
requests and will send the same to CBSG
headquarters after all necessary procedures in the
field have been completed.

Grant Agreement for Palez Wali School
Surrounding Wall Project: A grant agreement was signed for a school wall project in Palez Wali in Chemtal District of Balkh Province on December 5. The Community Based Stabilization Grants project field team has started the activities and asked the Community Development Center to open a bank account and prepare quotations for the purchase of construction materials. The surrounding wall will further improve the learning environment and contribute to student security.



Surrounding wall will improve the learning environment. Photo: USAID/CBSG



December 1-December 15, 2010



Priority needs of schools are surrounding walls. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Mangajik School Surrounding Wall Project: On December 4, a Community Based Stabilization Grants project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team visited Mangajik District to receive the latest update on the progress of the school surrounding wall project. The visit revealed that approximately 25 percent of the project work is complete. A request was made to speed up the construction process due to cold weather that will affect the construction process.

In addition, the M&E team met with the head of the Community Development Center and school principal. Both affirmed that project activities are going forward as planned and that they are trying to speed up the work progress in order to complete the project based on the grant agreement timelines.

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Maradyan School Rehabilitation Project: On December 5, the Community Based Stabilization Grants project monitoring and evaluation team visited the Maradyan Boys High School rehabilitation project to get the latest update on the progress. Approximately 10 percent of the project work is complete. The team met with the head of the Community Development Center and school principal. Both affirmed that project activities are going forward smoothly and that they are trying to speed up the work progress in order to complete the project within its period. The rehabilitation will contribute to stability in the district and encourage students to attend school more regularly.



Monitoring visits help make sure the work is in progress. Photo: USAID/CBSG



CBSG team monitoring the work progress. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Aqcha School Rehabilitation Project: On December 6, a Community Based Stabilization Grants project monitoring and evaluation team visited the Aqcha Boys High School Rehabilitation Project to get the latest update on the progress of school rehabilitation. Approximately 10 percent of the project work is complete. It was a good opportunity for the

December 1-December 15, 2010

monitoring and evaluation team to meet with the head of the Community Development Center and school principal to discuss the project. The work schedule will increase in order to meet the completion date determined in the grant agreement.

Project Selection in Kohistanat District: On December 5, a Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project technical team visited Kohistanat, an insecure district in the Saripul Province. During the visit, the team met with Community Development Council members and community elders. The district governor and Community Development Centers were familiarized with CBSG and its policies and practices. They were asked to identify new projects in key areas of their district. At the meeting, road-gravelling projects were proposed in eight districts of Sari Pul Province, which will improve transportation links. The projects



Discussion to identify priority projects. Photo: USAID/CBSG

will benefit the large numbers that travel to the district capital and enable proper access to health services, especially in winter when the roads are unusable for motor vehicles.



Sayad residents in need of protection wall and a bridge. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Survey Team Visits Sayad District: On December 7, a Community Based Stabilization Grants project technical team surveyed two project sites identified by the District Development Assembly and district governor. The projects are a retaining wall of 150 meters long and 2-meters high, as well as a bridge with a length of six meters. Implementation of these projects will ease transportation for all neighboring communities and improve travelling to the district capital and access to health centres for their 51,600 residents.

December 1-December 15, 2010

Takatoe Payeen 3-Kilometer Road Gravelling Activity Survey: On December 2, a Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project team received a pre-proposal for a three kilometer road gravelling activity in Takato-e- Payeen village in Ayback District of Samangan Province. They conducted a site visit on December 4, to collect the information for the grant application. They met with the head of the Community Development Center and community elders and familiarized them with the CBSG project. The road-gravelling project will solve transportation problems experienced in all seasons and enable the residents to have improved access to markets and basic services.



Road gravelling is top priority in most communities. Photo: USAID/CBSG



Cold weather and snow disrupt work progress. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Monitoring and Evaluation Visits to Karti Sulh and Shorabak School Surrounding Wall Projects:

On December 7, a Community Based Stabilization Grants monitoring and evaluation team visited Karte-Solh Village of Samangan Province to obtain the latest updates from an ongoing school surrounding wall activity. The visit revealed that 20 percent of the work is complete and work is progressing according to plan. In the same day, a site visit was conducted to the Shoraback School to evaluate the surrounding wall ongoing activity. Twenty percent of the work is complete but delays have been experienced due to snow and cold weather.

CBSG Visits Kahmard District: A Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project technical team visited Kahmard District and met with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan officials and the District Development Assembly members to introduce the CBSG project. They were briefed on CBSG policies and practices and asked to identify their priority activities.



Meetings for project identification. Photo: USAID/CBSG

December 1-December 15, 2010



School furniture projects advance education opportunities. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Abdul Kabir Primary School Procurement Activity:

On December 7, 320 chairs and desks for students, six desks for teachers, 10 chairs for teachers, one seat couch, two bookshelves, and 30 meters of carpet were handed over to the Abdul Kabir Primary School to benefit 640 students. The procurement has contributed to an increase in the number of students enrolled and encouraged parents to send their children to school.

Meeting with Field Program Officer (FPO) in Kunduz: During the reporting period, a provincial meeting was held between the Kunduz FPO and the Afghan Development Association (ADA) Provincial Manager at the ADA Kunduz office. During the meeting, they discussed the progress of projects ongoing in the province and the development of new pre-proposals. The FPO expressed his satisfaction on work progress and agreed on holding meetings of a similar nature in the future. All agreed that regular meetings would provide opportunities for solving problems and keeping projects on track during their implementation.



Meetings provide the opportunity for better coordination. Photo: USAID/CBSG



Counterpart Chief of Party signing agreement with AWEC Director (I-PACS ISO). Photo: USAID/IPACS

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

IPACS II Launch Event: On December 9, 2010, Counterpart officially launched the Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) II project. During the event, Counterpart and its partners introduced the three-year I-PACS II project to representatives from government, donors, civil-society organizations, and I-PACS key partners. It was a great opportunity for all to learn more about the I-PACS II project, its objectives, activities, expected results, and partnerships. In addition, institutional support grant agreements were signed between Counterpart and its seven Intermediary Service Organizations, namely: Afghan Civil Society

December 1-December 15, 2010

Forum Organization (ACSF), Afghanistan Center for Training and Development, Association of Defense for Women Rights Organization, Afghan Women Educational Center, Basic Education and Employable Skill Training, Education Center for Poor Women and Girls of Afghanistan, and Women Activities and Social Service Organization.

Through these sub-grant agreements, I-PACS awarded approximately \$841,000 to these seven organizations. These grants will enable I-PACS partners to advance their organizational development, support their resource centers, enable key staff to be directly involved with the implementation of I-PACS II initiatives, and allow I-PACS partners to plan and implement trainings and technical assistance that are tailored to their specific needs, which may include gender action planning, monitoring, and evaluation of programs, or conducting community outreach work.

Engineer Aziz Rafiee, ACSF director, stated, "We are here, celebrating a partnership which is fruitful for the people of Afghanistan. As Afghanistan and our people are in a very tough situation, it seems like everything is a priority. And this partnership with I-PACS does contribute to the nation-building process, by strengthening civil society, so we are happy to continue this work."

Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) Launch: The Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and Afghan civil-society organizations, together with the Ambassador's Small Grants Project (ASGP) to Support Gender Equality, launched the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) on December 12 at MoWA. AWAC is a group of twenty women-focused Afghan civil-society organization partners of the ASGP, which will engage in efforts to support the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) goals. WoWA's H.E. Husan Bano Ghazanfar also signed a memorandum of understanding, which will formalize the relationship between MoWA, AWAC, and ASGP and promote the development of the civil-society advocacy coalition, enhance MoWA's advocacy efforts, and promote public education and advocacy on women's rights. This is the first formalized agreement of cooperation and coordination between Afghan civil-society organizations and MoWA. This agreement contributes to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and NAPWA priorities for formation of partnerships with relevant institutions involved in furthering gender equality. The event concluded with a question and answer session directed at selected participants of the panel discussion.

Grant Information Workshop: USAID with the Public Affairs (PAS), Pol-Mil, and the Interagency Provincial Affairs sections jointly held a Grant Information Workshop at the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) office on Tuesday, December 14. Information on U.S. Government civil society small grants projects was provided to the 71 invited AWN member organizations in two sessions. The presentation of funding opportunities through the U.S. Embassy (i.e. Afghan Women's Empowerment, Quick Response Grants, PAS, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Ambassador's

December 1-December 15, 2010

Small Grants Program, Governance Annual Program Statement, and the Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society) was followed by a session on writing grant proposals for nongovernmental organizational participants.

Afghanistan Media Development and Empowerment Program (AMDEP): USAID supported Salam Watandar, the national independent news and analysis radio network, was recognized for its work this week with a gold medal from the Wolesi Jirga. The satellite news network and three of its reporters received recognition of its exemplary coverage of Afghanistan's first post-Taliban Parliament. Nearly a hundred journalists and dignitaries attended the ceremony, including Minister of Information and Culture Sayyid Makhdoom Raheen, Head of RTA Anzoor, and Secretary of the Wolesi Jirga Ghulam Hasan Giran. Salam Watandar has provided comprehensive coverage of Parliament, including daily news, live talk shows, and weekly programming such as "Your Representative," since its inception in 2005 and is one of only four local media organizations to have a full-time reporter based at Parliament.

The Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Project Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Roundtable Discussions: Saba Media Organization (SMO) and Educational and Training Center For Poor Women and Girls of Afghanistan (ECW) organized a series of three roundtables in Kabul, Balkh, Hirat, and Kunduz provinces on the implementation of the law on EVAW on December 8 and 9. The discussions were filmed in each province by SMO and ECW, and will be broadcast in 22 provinces via radio and television after December 17 (on four Friday evenings).

Performance Based Governors Fund (PBGF): On December 15, the Asia Foundation submitted the needed information for a \$2.5 million, four-month cost extension to the PBGF. Once approved, the extension of the current agreement will continue through May 30. This amendment to the current project assures provincial officers job security while plans are being made for PBGF's next phase. Concurrently, the Office of Democracy and Governance submitted a status update to the front office with the timeline for the next phase of PBGF and action items and due dates during the next 90 days.

Kabul City Initiative (KCI): KCI staff began implementing the Organizational Management Assessment of the Kabul Municipality. The assessment will surface priority needs for improved systems, procedures, and management skills. Recommendations from the assessment will be ready on or about January 22, 2011.

USAID responded to the ambassador's service request received from citizens in District 16 through a meeting between KCI and the mayor to discuss the repairs to drainage and floodwalls. KCI and the mayor will work next with the U.S. Army Corp or Engineers and the PRT to look at options to resolve the problem in coordination with the District 16 manager. (Note that the mayor was appreciative that the KCI staff informed him of this

December 1-December 15, 2010

request but also wanted to make sure that future requests from the districts are sent directly to him for action.)

Afghanistan Parliament Assistance Project (APAP): While the Wolesi Jirga (lower house) is in recess, pending inauguration (expected by January 21), APAP focused much of its efforts with Parliament staff, civil society, and the Meshrano Jirga Committees. APAP presented the budget report to the Meshrano Jirga (Senate) Budget Committee in preparation for the committee's receipt and consideration of the Afghan national budget in early 2011. APAP also made a presentation on the content and impact of the transport sector policy to the Meshrano Jirga Communications and Transportation Committee.

Afghanistan Parliament Assistance Project (APAP): APAP trained the Department for International and Public Relations staff on basic journalism skills. APAP also provided Afghan journalists with training on budget and economics reporting as they relate to the national budget consideration. Moreover, APAP's outreach effort instructed a pilot group of civil-society organizations on how to effectively engage Parliamentary committees during meetings to productively explain their issues and raise their concerns.

Kandahar Field Visit: Office of Development and Governance staff conducted a field visit this week to Kandahar Province to look at the next phase of the Regional Afghan Municipal Program for Urban Population - South. In the coming year, substantial implementation is expected for additional activities in the south and southwest. Simultaneously, meetings related to the Rule of Law Stabilization-Informal sector took place to prepare for follow-on activities.

COMISAF Sub-National Governance Briefing: Office of Development and Governance and Stabilization Unit staff presented USAID's projects supporting subnational governance efforts to General Petraeus on December 12. The Regional Afghan Municipal Program for Urban Population (RAMP UP), the Afghanistan Social Outreach Program (ASOP), and the District Delivery Program (DDP) as well as other stabilization projects were explained within the context of stabilization and development. Regular ASOP, RAMP UP, and DDP update briefs will be offered in future ISAF morning standups.